

WITH THE FARMERS

By Prof. W. F. MASSEY

(Letters addressed to Professor Massey must have stamp inclosed for answer.)

Thursday, February 19, 1914.

Old Rose Bushes.

"As you seem

willing to advise

me, I would like to know

what to do with

some old rose

bushes that have

been on our lawn

for twenty-five

years in one place.

They do not bloom

well after May and

June. They are

what we call

the "dead-end" roses.

The

larger roots seem

dead, and there are

old dead stems

above ground." There

is a limit

to the life of all created things,

and rose bushes are no exception,

though they are very long lived where

taken care of. The fact that your old

rose bushes have dead roots and dead

stems above ground shows that they

have been neglected in the past. Stand-

ing in one place for twenty-five years,

they have about used up the plant food

in their reach. A rose bush is a greedy

feeder, and will use as much manure

as a corn plant, and probably in all

these twenty-five years you have not

thought of manuring them or cutting

out every spring the stunted wood.

If you want to keep them, you should

now cut away all the dead wood and

the stunted growth, and dig in around

them a heavy coat of old rotten man-

ure. This, I think, will rejuvenate

them, but the best thing that you can

do will be to grub them out and get

good new plants of the modern im-

proved Hybrid Tea roses, and prepare

the soil deeply and manure heavily and

keep them properly pruned, cutting out

all stunted growth and shortening the

new canes slightly. Roses have been

in hardy varieties for years that it is

hardly worth while to try to renew

very old bushes of the old common

kind.

Strawberries and Raspberries.

"What do you know of the Progress-

ive strawberry and the Red Tree Ras-

pberry offer in a circular I send from a

Western farm? The Progressive

strawberry is one of the best of the

fall bearing varieties. I know nothing

about the Tree Raspberry, nor the firm

offering them. They may be all right,

so far as I know. I have the Superb

and the American, the fall-bearing

strawberries, and they, too, are good

The Progressive is the latest one sent

out, and I have not yet fruited it, but

it is grown here. The best fall bearing

raspberry I have tried is the Regis,

and I have a very late-fruited black-

berry, the Nanticoke, which has fruit

as late as September. For a main crop,

I know no better strawberry than the

Chesapeake.

Making a Fertilizer.

Nottoway County: "I have 1,600

pounds of salt herrings, 500 pounds of

chicken manure and two tons of hard-

wood ashes. What chemicals would

you add to make a fertilizer for corn

and potatoes?" None at all. In fact,

I would not mix these materials, for

the lime in the ashes will carbonate the

ammonia in the chicken manure and the

organic matter in the herrings, and

you would lose it. You might make a

compost of the herrings and the

chicken manure with a lot of black

earth from the forest and make an

article that would do some good on the

corn spread broadcast. But spread the

corn on the corn land only, and use the

potatoes, for the ashes would make

them more liable to be scabby. Never

mix ashes or lime with manure. But

after the manure is on the land you can

add the ashes, and the soil will absorb

any ammonia set free.

Lime as a Fertilizer.

Louisiana County: "We have nine acres

of second growth new ground and a

number of acres in German clover,

which will all be planted to corn this

spring. We are thinking of using

oyster shell lime. Like sample inclosed.

We can get this delivered at our depot

for \$5 per ton sacked. Will this do the

corn and clover, or would it be

best to wait and use it on pea

fallow when sown to clover?" Lime

is not used as a fertilizer. Of course,

plants do use some lime as food, but

there is hardly any cultivated soil

that does not already contain all the

lime needed as plant food. The lime

will have a good effect on the corn

if the soil is acid and needs lime, and

in any event with new ground and

turning under crimson clover (please

do not call it German, for it is not

any more German than American) lime

will be certainly useful. I have al-

ways found that the best place to ap-

ply lime is after turning a sod for

corn. Then harrow it in well and use

from 1,000 to 2,000 pounds an acre.

Beans, Beets and Potatoes.

King William County: "Please tell

us the best early snaps, beets and

Irish potatoes to plant, and when to

plant?" The Black Valentine and Bur-

pee's Green Pod Stringbeans are the best

early snap beans, in my opinion.

These must not be planted till frost

is over. I always take a little risk,

and plant about the 10th of April,

making little ridges east and west,

and planting the earliest on the south

side of the ridge as a shelter from

cold winds. Beets I am now about to

sow in the frames under glass. Out-

doors I plant them the latter part of

February. I use the Bassano, but the

market gardeners, who must have a

dark, red beet and small top for

bunching, use the Egyptian, as the

Bassano has a big top and is light in

color, though of fine quality. Eclipse

is also good. The Irish Cobbler is the

best early Irish potato if you make

sure to get a pure stock, for there is

much mixture on the market.

Fertilizing Peanuts.

Sussex County: "I followed your ad-

vice last summer in working my corn,

and found it the best way to make

corn. Now, I want to know something

about peanuts, as this is a peanut

country. I have some land which was

in peanuts in 1912, which I wish to

plant in Spanish peanuts this year.

Which would be best to use, 15 per

cent acid phosphate or a 10-4 fertilizer?

It grew very good peanuts and very

few pods. Then as to cultivating, is

it an invader better than the cotton

plow? I have had them turn yellow

on sandy land, when a heavy rain came

after the cultivator. Do you advise

shallow or deep plowing? Does it in-

jure them to break the roots in the

middle? I noticed last July in plow-

ing the last time the roots closed the

plow like corn roots. Please reply in

The Times-Dispatch." The mixture of

10 per cent phosphoric acid and 4 per

cent potash is simply acid phosphate

and potash. The best fertilizer for

peanuts is 500 pounds of Thomas

phosphate (Basic slag), fifty pounds of

nitrate of soda and fifty pounds of

muriate of potash an acre. The

Thomas phosphate carries nearly 50

per cent of lime, and that will tend to

sweeten the soil for the nuts, and will

also release some potash that may be

in an insoluble state in the soil, for it

is lack of potash that causes pods to

be small. The roots of the nuts, and

to test the roots. The roots are feed-

ing the plants, and, of course, the pods

or the corn will suffer from broken

roots. Use the cultivator run

shallow all the time, but make the

use a plow in the cultivation of any

crop, but cultivate shallow and level

and keep a mulch of loose soil on the

surface all the time, to prevent the

evaporation of moisture.

Cultivating Potatoes and Fertilizing.

Which do you consider best to plant,

two eye pieces of the Irish potatoes

or to quarter the potatoes? Is it all

right to run out the furrows and put

the fertilizer in the furrows, and then

run a sweep through to mix the fertilizer with the

soil? Is it a good plan to use stable

manure under potatoes? Will beans

make a good money crop in the same

section? What kind and how fertil-

ized, etc." Experiments have shown that large

pieces of potatoes will make more po-

tatoes than small ones, but there will

not be enough difference to make up

for the greater expense for seed. Two

eye pieces are best for planting. Of

course, the fertilizer should be mixed

with the soil in the furrows, and it

matters little what you use to mix it.

The truck farmers plant snap beans,

and generally they are fairly profit-

able, and do not cost a great deal to

grow. The commercial mixture, 10-4,

is very good for beans, and the Black

Valentine is as early as any. But if

you query refers to dry beans, then

I would advise you to let them alone,

for we cannot make them as profitably

as they are made in the North. It

is not advisable to use stable manure

under Irish potatoes, as it is apt to

favor the scab fungus.

Alaska Railroad Measure Passes

House, 230 to 87

(Continued From First Page.)

road above maintenance charges and

operating expenses.

The debates in Congress on this bill

have developed the fact that until re-

cently Alaska has been unappreciated,

and that in the interior there are im-

ense agricultural resources capable of

sustaining the population of Sweden,

Finland, Denmark, Russia and Siberia.

This fertile land is expected to be taken

up at once by homesteaders.

Alaska has two notable coal fields,

larger than any in the United States,

and possibly in the world. The Behring

River field covers seventy-five square

miles, and the Matanuska field eighty

five. They are practically virgin, only

one title having been perfected. The

rest belongs to the government.

Saving to Government.

The opening of mines in Alaska to-

gether with the building of a rail-

road and the opening of the Panama

Canal, it is estimated will save the

government from \$3 to \$5 a ton on its

coal burned in the Pacific. Alaska it-

self now buys coal from British Col-

umbia. One statistical agency figures that

Alaska has as much coal as Pennsylv-

ania and West Virginia together, and

that it is as good in quality.

Senator Chamberlain, in meeting the

opposition to the proposal that the gov-

ernment go into the railroad business

to the extent of \$35,000,000, admitted

that this would be the first time the

government had ever owned a railroad,